Joel Sutherland

A FUNERAL DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT THE INTERMENT OF

THE REVD. BENJAMIN STEVENS, D. D.

Who departed this life May 18, 1791.

By SAMUEL HAVEN, D. D.

Paſtor of the South Church in Portſmouth.

"*Well done, good and faithful ſervant, enter*
"*then into the joy of thy Lord.*"

PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

Funeral Diſcourſe &c.

DEAR BRETHREN,

You all know—you feel the ſerious and affecting occaſion of our being now aſſembled in the houſe of the Lord, and of my ſtanding in this ſacred deſk. While we behold the remains of our reverend father, brother, friend, ready to be interred, ſo that our eyes ſhall ſee his face no more, our ears no more hear his voice: is there then no paſſage in ſacred writ which may repreſent to us, as in a glaſs, the face of his religious and miniſterial character? have we not abundant grounds to believe the words I have choſen, to lead our meditations, on this mournful occaſion, anſwer this deſign, and might with great propriety, have been the adopted language of the deceaſed? you will find them written in

2d. EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY, IV. 7, 8 VERSES.

" *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my*
" *courſe, I have kept the faith: henceforth*
" *there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſ-*
neſs,

" *neſs, which the Lord, the righteous judge*
" *ſhall give me at that day; and not to me only,*
" *but unto all them alſo that love his appear-*
" *ing.*"

THIS is the language of ſuch an one as Paul, the aged—happy was he indeed in the review of life, who on the very confines of eternity, had the teſtimony of his conſcience, thro' the grace which is in Chriſt, that he had fought a good fight, that he had kept the faith. Hail happy Paul! thou couldſt go on to ſay, with the full aſſurance of hope, " henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the LORD the righteous Judge ſhall give me at that day."

Not that he depended on any righteouſneſs of his own, as the meritorious cauſe of his acceptance before GOD, or by any means the price of heavenly glory: No, not even on any of the graces of the ſpirit, which were wrought in him by a divine hand: nay, beloved, for we find this very apoſtle in the third chapter to the Philippians, utterly diſclaiming all ſuch vain dependence. He forgot the things that were behind; he reached forward towards thoſe things which were before; he preſſed towards the mark for the prize of the high calling

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of God in Chriſt, deſiring above all things, to win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having on his own righteouſneſs, which was of the law, but the righteouſneſs which is of God, by Faith in Chriſt. Yet it is carefully to be obſerved, that the faith which apprehends, and appropriates to us the juſtifying righteouſneſs of Chriſt, cannot fail to produce chriſtian obedience. Hence true Chriſtian obedience, or perſevering fidelity, is a good evidence that we are poſſeſſed of a juſtifying Faith; and is greatly comfortable to a ſoul juſt entering on eternity. For whom God thus juſtifies, them he alſo ſanctifies, and whom he ſanctifies, them he will ſurely glorify.

Thus the language of my text, far from breathing a ſpirit of vain glory, and ſelf dependance; than which nothing was diſclaimed in ſtronger language by our Apoſtle; is deſigned to repreſent what St. Paul was by the grace of God, wherein he exhibited himſelf as an example to his ſon Timothy, and to all chriſtians, and chriſtian miniſters, in all the ages of the Church. All muſt follow him, as he follow'd Chriſt. Happy for us, whether Miniſters or private chriſtians, if, in the review of life, we are able to ſpeak in the ſame joyful ſtrain and ſay, I have fought a good fight &c. But in order

order to this, it is neceſſary we ſhould keep in view the end of life, and carefully obſerve the ſeveral things contained in our text. Theſe I ſhall conſider diſtinctly.

FIRST. The apoſtle could ſay ſincerely, "I have fought a good fight."

You readily obſerve, the language is metaphorical: the chriſtian life is compared to a warfare, a metaphor not uncommon in ſcripture. This ſame apoſtle exhorts chriſtians to war a good warfare: to fight the good fight of faith to put on the whole armour of GOD: to endure hardneſs as good ſoldiers of Chriſt.—And the reward of divine grace, promiſed to all who are faithful, are repreſented by alluding to the ſame kind of metaphors: ſuch as a crown of righteouſneſs which fadeth not away, a crown of life, a ſetting in dignity and glory on a throne of heavenly glory with Chriſt, "he that overcometh, I will grant to ſet down with me, on my throne, *(ſays the bleſſed Jeſus)* even as I overcame, and am ſet down with my father on his throne."

If it be enquired, in what reſpect does the miniſterial life reſemble a warfare? the anſwer to this enquiry will ſhew us what is neceſſarily contained in our fighting the good fight.

It is plain then, that the chriſtian life is a warfare,

warfare, as we have many enemies to oppoſe, would we fight the good fight of faith, we muſt eſteem whatever is contrary to the holy law of GOD, and the goſpel of our LORD *Jeſus Chriſt*, our enemy.

The *fleſh*, the *world*, and the *Devil* are general names under which, every thing which oppoſes the chriſtian life is comprehended. The natural principles of a carnal heart are totally oppoſite to thoſe which govern the faithful miniſter and ſincere chriſtians. They, who are in the *fleſh*, that is, under the influence and goverment of apoſtate nature, cannot pleaſe GOD, the carnal mind is enmity againſt GOD. And to be carnally minded is *Death*. Now it is ſadly true, that notwithſtanding every good miniſter, and every ſincere chriſtian is renewed in the ſpirit of his mind; yet theſe evil principles and affections are not wholly ſubdued: Alas! that they have ſo much reaſon after all, to complain, and cry out in the language of our apoſtle, "Oh wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this *Death?*"

Alas! That we have ſuch ſad remains of pride, or covetouſneſs, or intemperate deſires after ſenſual gratifications, that we have ſo much hardneſs of heart,—ſo much unbelief,——and a ſad train of ſinful imperfections, beſt known to every man's own conſcience. Now,

Now, theſe remains of ſinful principles and evil affections muſt be carefully and diligently oppoſed, and counteracted. Would we be good miniſters, do we deſire to be good chriſtians, we muſt watch, and ſtrive, and pray againſt them all; would we fight a good fight, we muſt keep under our bodies; and if called to it, reſiſt even unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin! We muſt be able to reſolve, even from the inmoſt receſſes of our hearts, in the language of the apoſtle, and primitive chriſtians, "ſin ſhall have no more dominion over us, that we ſhould obey it in its affections and luſts."

Again, the world is an enemy to true religion—the man of the world—the things of the world—both theſe often prove ſnares, and traps laid in the way of the good miniſter, and ſincere chriſtians: theſe muſt be carefully avoided, or ſtrenuouſly oppoſed—& bleſſed be GOD, not our apoſtle only, but every one, who now fights the good fight of faith, can ſay "this is our victory over the world even our faith." Chriſtians are taught to look, not at things which are ſeen, which are periſhing, but at things which are not ſeen which are eternal.—And yet, alas! My Brethren! We all know how powerfully ſenſible objects ſtrike the mind and you, who are believers indeed and in truth,

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and not in name only, know what conſtant watchfulneſs and circumſpection, what holy ardour and zeal are neceſſary to preſerve us in any good meaſure, unſpotted from the world.

Again, Satan is a ſubtle, and powerful adverſary, wiſe by long experience, he, having enliſted into his ſervice the fleſh and the world, often wounds, enfeebles,and terrifies even thoſe who are really enliſted under the banner of the Capt. of our ſalvation,—him, therefore we muſt reſiſt, being ourſelves ſtedfaſt in the faith.

Shall it not encourage us, that we are called to engage in the warfare under the all-conquering *Jeſus :* render him who has ſpoiled principalities and powers, and holds that great enemy of mankind in his chain ? Yea, who has not only appeared in our world to deſtroy death but even him who had the power thereof, that it is the *Devil ?* Is it not matter of high encouragement that we are provided with a good armour ? And that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but ſpiritual and mighty, thro' GOD, to the pulling down of the ſtrong holds of Satan ?—Shall we not then, take to ourſelves the whole armour of GOD, the armour of righteouſneſs on the right hand and on the left ?—Shall we not have our loins girt about with truth, and having on the breaſtplate of righte-

ouſneſs, and our feet ſhod with the preparation of the goſpel of Chriſt? Shall we not take the ſhield of faith, and the helmet of ſalvation, and the ſword of the ſpirit which is the word of God? Will it afford us any cauſe of holy triumph, that our cauſe is good? It is a *good* fight —our general is the holy one of Iſrael—he has all wiſdom and power in his hands, and will judge the people with equity.—And every method preſcribed in order to ſecure us victory is good; and the promiſe from his ſacred undeceiving lips is, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."———— But we paſs to conſider the ſecond branch of my *Text*.—

Secondly. "I have finiſhed my courſe." In theſe words, our apoſtle compares the chriſtian life to a race, no doubt in the olimpic games. As tho' he had ſaid; "I have now finiſhed that race which I had undertaken; I am juſt cloſing it: A ſtep or two more and the prize is won: The heavenly crown is already prepared for me: Thro' divine grace, I have been enabled ſo to run, that I ſhall ſurely gain the *Goal*, and obtain the prize:" "O happy Paul! thou couldſt look back with ſuch pleaſure, on the ground thou had'ſt paſſed; thou couldſt look forward, with aſſured hope, as

tho'

tho' thy race was already ended; and ſay, I have finiſhed my courſe: Thou may'ſt now ſtretch forth the hand of faith, and thou wilt not extend it in vain, to receive the heavenly crown."

Now my dear Brethren; would we wiſh that in the cloſe of life, we might be able to ſpeak the ſame language, and to ſay, in the ſame ſenſe in which the apoſtle meant it, "I have finiſhed my courſe." We muſt then imitate the apoſtle in theſe following things.

First. We muſt continually hold in view the end of life, and the heavenly prize ſet before us.

The goſpel hope, is exhibited on purpoſe to fix our attention on the moſt weighty and intereſting concerns of eternity, and animate, us in our way to heaven. All the exceeding great & precious promiſes of the goſpel are given us, that by them we might be made partakers of a divine nature,—that keeping in view the glories of the heavenly world; and remembering that we run, not for an earthly but for an heavenly crown, we might be induced to lay aſide every weight and the ſin which moſt eaſily beſets us.

Thoſe who live at a looſe in regard to their views and purpoſes; thoſe who forget that they are

are not at home in the body,—thoſe in a word, who do not fix their attention on the end of life, and the hope of celeſtial glory, are not likely to finiſh their courſe with honor or ſafety. End life they muſt; and an awful end it will be to them: An end of all their carnal pleaſures,—of all their *cob-webb* hopes.—And the beginning of inconceivable perdition: the ſecond death will ſwallow them in unutterable ruin.—But not ſo, the faithful miniſter, and ſincere chriſtians, they endeavour always to hold in view the joyful hope ſet before them, and are waiting to receive the end of their faith and patience, even the ſalvation of their ſouls. Thus *Moſes* deſpiſed the riches and grandeur of *Pharaoh's* Court—chuſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon.

Secondly. Would we finiſh our courſe with holy joy and ſatisfaction, we muſt run with holy zeal and ardour.

The chriſtian race will not admit of idleneſs, the ſlothful chriſtian is a diſgrace to the chriſtian hope. We muſt labor and ſtrive to enter into that reſt, which remains for the people of God. We muſt give all diligence to make our calling and election ſure. In this reſpect, the kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Thirdly.

THIRDLY. We muſt run with perſeverence. Would we finiſh our courſe as the apoſtle did his,—like him we muſt hold out to the *end*.

It is not enough that we are ſet out in the race,—that we have run with zeal and ardour for a while; nay, my brethren, we muſt preſs on unto the end. We muſt run with patience and perſeverance the race that is ſet before us; looking continually unto Jeſus, who is the author and finiſher of our faith, "if any man draw back, God ſays, my ſoul hath no pleaſure in him." He who putteth his hand to the plough and looketh back, that is, he who ſeems to have began the chriſtian life, and afterwards, returns again to folly, is unfit for the kingdom of heaven. Oh! ſolemn and alarming conſideration to apoſtatizing chriſtians!——But we go on to obſerve, fourthly, the apoſtle has another form of expreſſion intimating his faithfulneſs and perſeverence in the chriſtian life, viz. "I have kept the faith."

If the following enquiry be made, viz. what does the apoſtle mean to intimate when he aſſerts that he had kept the faith? Let it be obſerved by way of reply, two things are plainly deſigned by this expreſſion, firſt, his maintaining the doctrines of the chriſtian faith with purity; and ſecondly, his living under the influence

ence of thoſe doctrines, or being conformed to the nature and importance of the great truths of the goſpel.—

Faith is often put in ſcripture for the whole ſyſtem of chriſtian doctrines, as that is oppoſed to all other doctrines : not only to the doctrines of *Plato* and *Socrates*, and all heathen moraliſts, but to the falſe interpretations of ſcripture given by men of corrupt minds. Accordingly, a Biſhop, a miniſter of the goſpel, muſt be ſound in the FAITH : The apoſtle ſpeaks of it as our duty to contend earneſtly for the FAITH once delivered to the ſaints. Thoſe who make ſhipwreck of FAITH, and a good conſcience, are perſons who *corrupt* the *word*, teaching for doctrines the traditions of men, and introduce damnable hereſies ;—they are given up to ſtrong deluſions :—they believe a lie ; and ſo walk contrary to the truth and purity of the goſpel.

Now the apoſtle when he ſays, " I have kept the faith" muſt ſurely mean, that he had maintained from time to time, the whole ſyſtem of chriſtian doctrines, according to the plain meaning of the holy ghoſt in the revealed word.—That he had not corrupted the word ; but had declared plainly the mind of God, as it had been revealed in the word, or had been made known to him by the holy ghoſt. But

But then ſurely, beloved friends, this was not all our apoſtle means, he muſt deſign moreover to repreſent, that he had, in ſome good meaſure, been conformed to the nature and importance of theſe great doctrines of the goſpel. For he roundly declares the importance of goſpel obedience : " This is a faithful ſaying, and I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they who have believed in Jeſus, be careful to maintain good works. He ſpeaks the importance of practical, experimental religion in the ſtrongeſt terms when he ſays, " herein do I exerciſe myſelf even to have always a cenſcience void of offence, towards GOD and towards man." and again, this is our rejoicing even the teſtimony of our conſciences, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity not by fleſhly wiſdom but by the grace of GOD, we have had our converſation in the world,

Would we then KEEP THE FAITH, let us attend cloſely to the word of GOD, let us not be deceived with vain words; but ſet before us the example of this great apoſtle, remembering that tho' an angel from heaven ſhould preach unto us any other goſpel than that which is declared to us in the word of GOD, he is to be rejected. Keeping the faith requires a ſtability, and firmneſs of mind, not liable to be carried

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away with every wind of doctrine, or the cunning ſlight of men, wherein they lie in wait to deceive. We muſt be rooted, and grounded in the truth: In order to this, it is neceſſary that divine truths ſhould take hold on our conſciences,—that we ſhould experience the force of them, transforming our lives. Thus, I have endeavoured to follow the apoſtle in the joyful teſtimony of his conſcience, witneſſing that he had fought a good fight, finiſhed his courſe and kept the faith.

"Happy beyond expreſſion, thou great apoſtle of the gentiles, thou haſt waded through a ſea of difficulties, and art now juſt at thy deſired haven: thou haſt endured hardneſs as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt, and haſt been made more than a conquerer, thro' the Captain of thy ſalvation. O! with what triumph and joy doſt thou ſpeak in the following aſſured language, "henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous judge ſhall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them alſo that love his appearing."

We have here brought to view the final reward of the faithful miniſter and good chriſtians to comfort us under the difficulties and trials of the preſent ſtate, and to engage us in a faithful

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perſevering regard to the goſpel of the bleſſed God. We ſhall briefly conſider the properties of this reward as hinted in the Text.

This glorious heavenly reward, reſerved for the Saints & every faithful miniſter, is repreſented under the metapher of a crown of righteouſneſs. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs" it is not a crown compoſed of fading laurels, ſuch as were beſtowed upon the Conquerer in the Grecian Games—Not ſuch a crown of Gold, ſet with the richeſt gems, and the moſt brilliant onyx ſtones, ſuch as adorn the heads of the Princes of this world, crowns much eſteemed by the ſons of pride—nay my brethren, but it is a crown of righteouſneſs. This property renders it peculiarly dear to ſincere chriſtians, this enhances its value above all other conſiderations whatever.

The convinced, humbled ſoul longs for nothing ſo much as for righteouſneſs, he ſees the infinite importance of being conformed to the moral image and likeneſs of his great Lord, he therefore hungers and thirſts after righteouſneſs; and now he ſhall be filled. Now he ſhall find himſelf cloathed with the pure robe of the redeemer's righteouſneſs, and adorned with the amiable graces of the ſpirit: He ſhall find himſelf, in ſome good meaſure, holy, as he who

called him is holy, he ſhall be ſatisfied, for he ſhall awake in a divine likeneſs.

O! happy chriſtians, O! happy thou faithful miniſter of the new *Teſtament*, thou haſt long mourned under a ſenſe of ſin, thou haſt been weary and heavy laden with thine own ſinful infirmities, thou haſt breathed after GOD, and longed to be in thy meaſure perfect, as thy heavenly father is perfect; now, thou art forever free from all the remains of ſin: now, thoſe are perfectly changed into the divine image, from glory to glory, by the ſpirit of the Lord. Now, thou ſhall ſee no more darkly, as thro' a glaſs, but face to face: Now, thou art ſanctified wholly; and in the moſt proper ſenſe, thou art fair as the ſun, and clear as the moon; ſo that being thus adorned, the King ſhall be greatly delighted with thy beauty; and thou ſhall be forever raviſhed with his love.

This is the reward of the faithful and good chriſtian in the heavenly world—it is ſtiled a crown of righteouſneſs to denote its ſuperlative dignity and glory. Jeſus, who is our glorious high Prieſt, who has paſſed into the heavens and is there a Prieſt on a throne, will make all the ſaints kings and prieſts, unto GOD forever.—Will beſtow on them glory, honor, immortality, eternal life.—But this brings me to obſerve.

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This crown of righteouſneſs is *laid up* for the faithful conquering chriſtian—" henceforth there is *laid up* for me, &c.

It is ſecured in the covenant of promiſe the new and everlaſting covenant, which is ordered in all things and ſure, contains the promiſe of everlaſting life, as one of its moſt important articles. GOD will beſtow grace and glory; he will give eternal life; and that life is in his Son, as the great author, purchaſer, exemplar, and beſtower of it. This crown of righteouſneſs is laid up in Chriſt as Surety, or mediator of the better covenant. The phraſe in the Text denotes, that this crown is already prepared for the Saints: a ſure foundation is laid up for it the way is already opened, Chriſt has wrought out, and brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs: —With his own moſt precious blood has he purchaſed that heavenly felicity, which his faithful followers ſhall enjoy to all eternity. He is gone before to prepare them manſions.

Again, the phraſe denotes the certainty of this glory,—this crown of righteouſneſs is ſecured to good miniſters, good chriſtians, and all who love his appearing. It is a rich and moſt important treaſure laid up in the heavens, where neither moth nor ruſt do corrupt; and where thieves cannot break thro' nor ſteal.—

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It is ſecured by the everlaſting Prieſthood of the great Meſiah: for he ever lives to make interceſſion for us, and both can, and will ſave to the uttermoſt, all that come to God by him.—It is ſecured by the almighty power, and ſupreme authority of Chriſt over all things, for he has life in himſelf, and has power to give life to whomſoever he pleaſes. It is ſecured by the covenant of redemption: Thoſe, whom the father gave unto him, he will keep, ſo that not one of them ſhall be loſt. And in fine, ſecured to them by the word, & *oath* of *Jehovah* himſelf! For by theſe two immutable things, in which it is impoſſible for God to lie, he hath confirmed this rich inheritance unto the heirs of ſalvation, that they might have ſtrong conſolation and a good hope, thro' grace, who have fled for refuge and have laid hold of this hope ſet before them: faithful is he, who has promiſed, who alſo will perform all his promiſes.

But moreover, it is carefully to be obſerved, this crown of righteouſneſs is a free *gift*, beſtowed by the judge himſelf, in the moſt important hour, "which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day." This is a material circumſtance in the reward of the faithful miniſter, and good chriſtian. This is a property never to be forgotten—tho' the crown of righteouſneſs

righteouſneſs is mentioned as a reward; yet, my hearers never forget, that it is a reward of free grace, not of debt. Our apoſtle evidently laid an emphaſis upon this conſideration. He would, by no means, have *Timothy* ſuppoſe, the crown of righteouſneſs, which he held in view, and which he knew was laid up for him, was due to him as the reward of his labors,—that he had, by any means merited it, or deſerved it at the hand of his judge. Nay, he roundly diſclaims all pretentions to merit. It was to be given him:—he would receive it at the hand of ſovereign *mercy*, as a moſt free and gracious GIFT. Where is boaſting then? It is excluded not only by the law of works, but by the law of grace: the œconomy of divine grace excludes forever all boaſting. The gift of GOD is eternal life, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. What is there in the moſt exemplary chriſtian, that can bear any kind of proportion to the crown of eternal life? Are chriſtians ſaved? It is not for works of righteouſneſs which *they* have done; but of GOD's mercy, thro' the laver of regeneration, and the renewing of the holy ghoſt. Let us obſerve the ſummary language of our apoſtle. "By grace are ye ſaved thro' faith; and that not of yourſelves; it is the gift of GOD." This crown is a free gift, a gift awarded by the judge himſelf.

himſelf. He will *declare* his righteouſneſs, in the ſolemn ſentence which will fix the State, both of the righteous and the wicked: to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for glory, honor, and immortality he will grant eternal life; but to them who are contentious, and obey not the truth, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh will he render, even to every ſoul who believeth not, whether he be *Jew* or *Gentile*: "*at that day*," this muſt refer, either to the day of death, or the day of judgment: Nor is it of much importance to determine which of theſe the apoſtle had principally in view.

At death the ſoul of the chriſtian, it is preſumed, will enter into a ſtate of heavenly glory. The Savior on the croſs addreſſed the penitent thief, in this moſt comfortable language, "this day ſhalt thou be with me in paradice." But it is probable our apoſtle held more eſpecially in view the great and emphatic day, the day of general judgment—that general aſſize day is often mentioned in ſcripture as one emphatic all important day, our bleſſed Lord ſaid unto his diſciples, "of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but my father only." In that important day, for which all other days were made," the bleſſ-

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ed *Jeſus*, to whom all judgment is committed, will appear in all the glory of his father, and of the holy angels, and being ſeated on the throne of ſupreme majeſty, all nations ſhall be aſſembled before him, he will paſs the infinitely important ſentence upon all, and render to every one according to the deeds done in the body—at that day every faithful miniſter, and every good chriſtian ſhall receive the crown of righteouſneſs which ſhall never fade away. But I muſt juſt glance at the laſt circumſtance mentioned in our text, viz.

This crown of righteouſneſs ſhall be held in common among *all* ſincere chriſtians, "which crown of righteouſneſs the Lord the judge will give—not to me only; but to ALL them alſo, that love his appearing."

It is true, my brethren, that every one ſhall be deſtinguiſhed with the reflected glory of the Deity, as tho' he ſtood the ſingle object of ſaving mercy: he ſhall receive a crown, or that glory which is prefigured by a crown of righteouſneſs: But let it be obſerved, every one of the ſaints ſhall be ſo united, both by the love of GOD and that perfected charity one towards another, and ſo joined together in their common Lord, that they ſhall be as one body, they ſhall altogether form one happy ſociety; one

grand

grand whole, Both the glory and ſongs of praiſe ſhall be of the ſame kind: Both the old and new teſtament ſaints ſhall ſing together the ſong of *Moſes and of the Lamb*. *Abraham* the father of the faithful, and head of the Jewiſh Church, and Paul, the great apoſtle of the Gentiles, with all, who have obeyed the truth, ſhall join together in the ſame anthems of praiſe to GOD and the Lamb forever. As theſe ſhall be one united ſociety; ſo they ſhall partake together of the ſame crown of life eternal. For GOD ſhall fill all ſouls with an inconceivable fullneſs of divine glory and felicity; for all ſhall be heirs of GOD, and joint heirs with Jeſus Chriſt unto the ſame heavenly inheritance. Then ſhall be accompliſhed in the moſt perfect manner, the precious purpoſes of the great interceſſion, expreſſed in his interceding prayer for his diſciples, and all who ſhould believe on his name thro' their word. John XVII. 21. 22. "Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them that ſhall believe on me thro' their word; that they all may be ONE; as thou father art in me, and I in thee, that they alſo may be one in us." And again, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in ONE that the world may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me."

Thus

Thus there ſhall be a univerſal Co-partnerſhip of heavenly joy by ſweet participation and the ſtrong cement of divine love: what each enjoys all enjoy. O, happy world, how unlike the preſent! all party zeal ſhall ceaſe forever: all dividing prejudices,—all bitter envyings, and ſtrifes ſhall be no more forever: for all ſhall love and be beloved: they ſhall ſtrive only in love, and by a heavenly kind of emulation to advance the higheſt praiſes of GOD, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Thus my dear friends, the final reward of every faithful miniſter and ſincere chriſtian, is repreſented by a crown of righteouſneſs: this crown is laid up for them: as a free gift: is beſtowed by the judge himſelf—at the day of death—at the general judgment—and is held in common, among all good miniſters, and all ſincere chriſtians: In both which claſſes, as a miniſter, as a ſincere chriſtian your late Reverend *Paſtor* undoubtedly held a diſtinguiſhed place. *

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NOTE.

* Doctor Stevens was the ſon of the Rev. Joſeph Stevens, an eminent miniſter of Charleſtown, who with all his family, this ſon excepted, were ſwept off by the ſmall pox. The father of the fatherleſs was his guardian, and in the year 1736 he was admitted a

I have had a ſpecial regard to the teſtimony, we are all ready to bear, in behalf of the amiable and worthy character of that truly venerable perſonage, whoſe ſacred remains are now before us, in peruſing the character and heavenly reward of the great *St. Paul*: You have ſurely followed me in the whole; every trait has been carefully attended to: And while the tear of grateful reſpect and tender affection, has ſtole ſilently down ſome cheeks, you have obſerved with no ſmall ſatisfaction, the happy portrait of Doctor *Stevens* in that of St *Paul*: I mean, not

member of Harvard College. He devoted himſelf to the work of the miniſtry, and on the 1ſt of May 1751 was ordained paſtor of the firſt church in Kittery.—He married a daughter of the Hon. Judge Remington by whom he had one child—His wife died May 27, 1763: he lived in a ſingle ſtate until the day of his death, which joyful day to him, and melancholy to his friends, was the 18th of May 1791. His only daughter and child married the Rev. Mr. Buckminſter, March 24, 1782, by whom he had three amiable children, one ſon and two daughters, who are the only ſurviving branches of the Doctor's family.—Mrs Buckminſter died of a conſumption July 17, 1790—ſhe reſigned her departing ſoul with great ſerenity, and joyful expectation of eternal life, thro' the grace of the goſpel: As ſhe was moſt deſervedly in high eſteem while living, ſo her death was univerſally lamented by all who knew her.

not to equal our late friend, a brother in *all* reſpects, with that great apoſtle, of the *Gentiles*, who was in Labors more abundant than *all* the other apoſties ; the Doctor's well known humility and modeſty, would bluſh at the idea : but ſay ! has he not been a follower of him, at ſome humble diſtance, even as that apoſtle followed Chriſt.

I am a ſtranger to panegyric ; and hope I ever ſhall be. Nor could any thing be more foreign from the wiſh of our deceaſed Friend, than to have his name embalmed with panegyrical flights, or labored eulogiums. He expreſly enjoined the contrary on me, in his laſt ſickneſs : But the righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance. The exemplary chriſtian, the able, faithful miniſter, ſurely ought not ſoon to be forgotten ; I truſt, his truly amiable character, is wrote, as with a pen of iron, and the point of a diamond,—not indeed, on cruſted marbles.——But on the fleſhly tables of your hearts.

You know—We all know, the reſpectability of the natural genius, and acquired improvements, of him, who now lies a lifeleſs *Corpſe* before us :—His mind, was quick and penetrating :—His judgment ſound and perſpective—His dignity, was drawn from the great ſtandard n-

dard of truth :—His ſtile, was manly ; and his compoſitions ſenſible and elegant. You know, he labored his diſcourſes, and did not bring you that which coſt him nothing :—He brought you out of his treaſure, things new and old ; and approved himſelf a ſcribe, well inſtructed unto the kingdom of heaven.

You recollect with what ſeriouſneſs, plainneſs, and affection he addreſſed himſelf to your conſciences, both publickly, and from houſe to houſe.—You have experienced the advantage, and unſhaken conſtancy of his *friendſhip*,—the *generoſity* of his heart and hands ; for he ſought not yours, but YOU.

In the more private line of a domeſtic character, I make the appeal to all who knew him in that line, was he not faithful,— kind, tender hearted,— pitiful ?—In a word, was not his converſation, ſuch as becometh the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt ?—Was not his ſpeech ſavoury, ſeaſoned as it were with ſalt ?—Did not heavenly and eternal things often hang on his lips ?

He often lamented his own infirmities, and ſinful imperfections ; (alas ! who is not called to this humiliating exerciſe every day ?—) The hope of heaven was greatly endeared to him by the conſideration, that *there* all that is now imperfect will be done away. He wiſhed none might

might follow him, or be influenced by his friendſhip, or examples, further than as he followed Chriſt. In fine, I am well aſſured, you will generally join me in this, that few have felt a fairer moral and miniſterial character, for our imitation, than the Reverend and venerable *Doctor Stevens*.

You will not be ſurpriſed therefore to hear, he met the king of terrors diſarmed: he was purſuaded *his* redeemer lives; and with great calmneſs and uncommon compoſure, reſigned his immortal part into the hands of GOD, thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.—There to receive at the hands of his glorious judge, the crown of righteouſneſs, which will never fade away.

And now, you the dear church and people of his late charge, for whom he longed in the bowls of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt will ſurely remember how you have received and heard, and learned, and hold faſt, and repent. You will ſee his face; you will hear his voice no more: But ſurely, you cannot forget the many words he hath ſpoken unto you in the name of the Lord O, let them ſink down into your hearts,—tranſcribe them into your lives; that ſo you may be his crown in the day of the Lord.

We render you our moſt cordial ſympathy; and ſhall ever hold ourſelves in readineſs to afford

ford you all the aſſiſtance in our power. We pity you in your embarraſſed circumſtances;—and pray, that GOD would either lead you to a ſpeedy and peaceable ſettlement of another faithful and able miniſter of the new teſtament, or in ſuch ways as he ſees beſt, to provide you with the public word and ordinances of the goſpel, that ſo your ſouls, and the ſouls of your dear children may be nouriſhed up unto eternal life.

While we thus take our part with the mourning Church and people in this place, we cannot forget the *worthy* SON in law, and amiable GRAND CHILDREN of the *Deceaſed*.

* Your tears, dear Sir, are ſcarcely dried, which were called forth on the death of your much loved partner, the only child of him, whoſe family would now have been blotted from the earth, had not a merciful GOD been pleaſed to continue it, in your line, by theſe dear children, which are your ſpecial charge. And now they flow again on this very ſorrowful occaſion. May GOD Almighty comfort you under all your ſorrows, with the conſolation, with which you alſo have endeavored to comfort others. May he long ſpare your life——your

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* The Reverend Mr. BUCKMINSTER, being by providence detained on a journey, the following paragraph was delivered in the third perſon,

breath, and ſtrengthen you, to nuture up theſe only dear remains of the deceaſed. And O, may the virtues and graces of their grand parents & *dear mother* live in them.

Surely, the miniſters of this town, and all the members of our aſſociation will make ſome ſpecial improvement of this ſolemn providence. * Know we not that GOD has taken away our maſter, our brother from our head? know we not that a great man is fallen in our Iſrael? a good ſoldier, a faithful miniſter, an honored father, a faithful friend is now removed far from us, and his body is NOW to be placed in the land of darkneſs. The Fathers, where are they? do the prophets live forever? This very day proves they do not. Come then, my beloved brethren, let us work while *our day* laſts: let us double our diligence; let us fight the good fight of faith; for we alſo ſhall 'ere long finiſh *our courſe*: let us pray, that we may all have our part in the mantle of every *Elijah* gone before us into heaven?—And that GOD would graciouſly qua-

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* Alas! my brethren, when this ſermon was deliv r-ed, did we expect the repeated call from Heaven directed to us—that we ſhould be broken with breach upon breach—that our dear brother the Rev. MR. SPRING, late Paſtor of the upper Church in Kittery, would next call forth our ſympathiſing tears? Oh! may we lay theſe providences to heart and prepare for our own turns.

lify our ſons to be Nazarites,—that inſtead of the fathers, in the place of us, who are now ready to be offer'd, there may be the children riſing and filling the ranks which we ſhall ſoon leave vacant.

O, may this whole aſſembly, and all the dear people of our reſpective charges be gathered unto Jeſus Chriſt—that there may be one ſheepfold, and one ſhepherd. May all the under ſhepherds, whom he has charged to feed his ſheep and his lambs, preſent their flocks to him at the laſt day, who, in the regions of immortality, will cauſe them to paſs under his own rod—lead them to green paſtures, and make them to drink of the river of life forever. Let us now anticipate the happy day, when the chief ſhepherd ſhall appear, and we ſhall appear with him in glory. Let us look out for that emphatic day, when the trump of God ſhall ſound, and all who are in their graves ſhall come forth;—when he, who hath ſaid, "Lo! I come quickly," ſhall come, and render both to miniſters and people according to their works. O! then may we receive from his all merciful hand that crown of righeouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous judge will give, in common, unto all them who love his appearing.

Grant this O Lord, of thy free mercy in Chriſt the glorious Meſſiah, and all the glory ſhall be given to the Father, Son and Holy-Ghoſt. *AMEN.*